

TRINITY NEWS

WEEK 40.
October 01, 2023
Proper 21

“Fulfilling the will of the Father”

The parable of the two sons. Matthew (21.23-32)

On this 18th Sunday after Pentecost, we want to rediscover and deepen this call of the psalmist: “Today, do not close your heart, but listen to the voice of the Lord” Ps 94,8. The Christian, in fact, does not remain insensitive to the voice of the Lord; this mobilizes his being, his action, and places him radically on the path to sanctification, by stripping himself of all pride, of all artifice, and by sharing the same feelings as Jesus Christ: obedience and the fulfillment of the will of the Father. It is therefore in this direction that the texts of today’s liturgy want to lead us. Sometimes this will of the Father could seem strange to us, as for the deportees of Israel to Babylon to whom the prophet Ezekiel exhorts to turn to the Lord (Ez 18,25-28). For the righteous man who turns away from his justice and no longer walks according to the will of God, he becomes perverted and follows the paths of his damnation. But the wicked who turn from their wickedness to practice righteousness and justice obtain salvation from the Lord.

The Gospel of Saint Matthew (21:23-32) gives us a striking example of this existential contrast in the parable of two sons sent by their father to work in his vineyard. In the refusal of the first, then his repentance to go to the vineyard; and the approval of the second, then its dissimulation and its refusal to go there, the Lord intends to remind us that it is the disposition of our heart which leads us to accomplish the will of God. This inner disposition should lead us to perform good deeds and not to flaunt our good intentions. You remember last Sunday it was also about the vineyard and the workers that the Father had hired to go and work in his vineyard. Those who had started early in the morning, then at noon and the workers of the last hour. The workers that Jesus presents to us today are not just any workers. These are the sons of the owner. Namely, those who sooner or later, will have the vineyard as an inheritance for them. The Father's exhortation to go and work in his vineyard is in fact an invitation to work on their own inheritance.

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This story is in line with the teachings of Christ, concerning those who consider themselves "righteous" and who believe they do not need conversion, and those who recognize themselves as "sinner" and who strive to change their ways of living. The gospel tells us the same thing in other words: "It is not those who say Lord, Lord who will enter the Kingdom of heaven, but those who do the will of my Father" (Mt 7:21) .

Saint Paul gives us a concrete example of the accomplishment of God's will, which should go as far as the stripping of oneself (Phil 2:1-11): Christ Jesus. He who in divine condition did not see fit to claim his right to be treated equal to God, but on the contrary, he emptied himself by taking the condition of servant. And in this act of self-emptying, God sovereignly exalted Him, endowing Him with a Name above every name. This is the deep meaning of God's will: to offer in His generosity and sovereign majesty eternal salvation to those who strip themselves in His presence and pursue his justice which surpasses all human understanding. May we, dear brothers and sisters, pursue the will of God while always having the same feelings that we should have in Christ Jesus. Amen.

SAINTS OF THE WEEK:

Francis of Assisi, Founder of the Friars Minor, 4 October. Francis was born in Assisi in central Italy either in 1181 or the following year. He was baptised Giovanni but given the name Francesco by his father, a cloth merchant who traded in France and had married a French wife. There was an expectation that he would eventually take over his father's business but Francis had a rebellious youth and a difficult relationship with his father. After suffering the ignominy of imprisonment following capture whilst at war with the local city of Perugia, he returned a changed man. He took to caring for disused churches and for the poor, particularly those suffering from leprosy. Whilst praying in the semi-derelict church of St Damian, he distinctly heard the words: "Go and repair my church, which you see is falling down." Others joined him and he prepared a simple, gospel-based Rule for them all to live by. As the Order grew, it witnessed to Christ through preaching the gospel of repentance, emphasising the poverty of Christ as an example for his followers. Two years before his death, his life being so closely linked with that of his crucified Saviour, he received the Stigmata, the marks of the wounds of Christ, on his body. At his death, on the evening of 3 October 1226, his Order had spread throughout western Christendom.

William Tyndale, Translator of the Scriptures, 6 October. Born in Gloucestershire in about the year 1494, William Tyndale studied first at Magdalen Hall, Oxford, and then at Cambridge. He became determined to translate the Scriptures from the Greek directly into contemporary English but was thwarted in this by the Bishop of London. So William settled in Hamburg in 1524, never returning to England. When the first copies of his translation arrived in England in 1526, it was bitterly attacked as subversive by the ecclesial authorities. He spent much of the rest of his life making revisions to his work, but also writing many theological works. His life's-work proved good enough to be the basic working text for those who, at the beginning of the following century, were to produce what became known as the Authorised Version of the Bible. He was eventually arrested in 1535 and imprisoned in Brussels on charges of heresy. He was first strangled and then burnt at the stake on this day in 1536. His last words were, "Lord, open the King of England's eyes."

There are but two great realities in the vast universe, - the heart of God
and the heart of man, and each is ever seeking the other.

[*Charles Henry Brent, Adventure for God, 1920*]